

The Czech guesthouse with the ECEAT sign has been awarded the prestigious European Award for its sustainability performance

During the recent "Rhodes Tourism Forum" which was held in November 2006 in Greece addressing sustainable tourism development, five European tourism accommodation facilities were awarded the "Royal Accommodation Award for Sustainable Tourism, 2006".

The Royal Awards for the European Environment Agency was initiated by Sustainability Foundation in 1996, to promote sustainable development by rewarding excellent performance and best practice. The Royal Awards are protected by his Royal Highness Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Felipe of Spain.

It was the first time in Europe that more than 30 eco-labels and environmental certificates addressing the accommodation sector have invited their certified businesses to apply for an international award by presenting their contribution to sustainable development.

From 60 facilities in 15 European countries, a prominent jury of sustainable tourism experts have selected 22 finalists to the award, and eventually the five winners.

The award in the category Bed & Breakfast went to Penzion a Kemp Javořice from the Czech Republic bearing the ECEAT logo. Being used to limited resources, the facility manages to reduce costs substantially by minimising energy use in many different ways.



The winner in the category Hotel & Guesthouse was Hotel Mürz Spa Wellness & Golf, in Bad Füssing, Germany. Among a huge variety of sustainability initiatives the hotel is equipped with an ecological swimming pond without need of chemical water purification additives.

Alma Verde Village & Spa of Portugal, winners in the category Holiday Homes, clearly demonstrated the possibility of delivering a nice and cool indoor climate using almost no energy. The lower temperature of the ground at a depth of two metres is used to cool fresh outside air in summer, which is then distributed to the interior of the building.

From far up in the north of Sweden, Grövelsjöns Fjällstation won the award for their innovative geothermal heating system. This unique technology is being used in an area covered with snow for most of the year. In addition this mountain lodge is providing organic cooking and ecotouristic excursions.

Finally, in the category camping, the prize went to Campingplatz Elbsee, Germany, which shows among many other initiatives how to run a campsite without any contribution to the greenhouse effect.

According to Stefan Fotiou, Tourism Programme Officer of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), all nominated demonstrated an excellent picture of innovation and responsible approach towards regarding sustainable development in the major sectors of the tourism industry.

Besides the honour of being recognised for their efforts towards sustainability, winners received a statue and a certificate.

The statue is symbolic, the Executive Director of the Royal Awards, Professor Mikael Backman explains. It demonstrates on one hand the huge impact of mankind on earth's environment, and on the other hand the worried and innovative human being that has to find the solution to these problems.

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